



Sarah Josepha Hale

"It requires but a few threads of hope, for the heart that is skilled in the secret, to weave a web of happiness."

Sarah Josepha Hale (1788-1879) was one of the most prominent voices in 19th century America. Sarah Buell was born in New Hampshire in 1788. Unable to attend school because of her sex, she was taught to read by her mother and advanced her education by borrowing college textbooks from her brother. As a young woman, she married a lawyer named David Hale, but her husband died suddenly of a stroke in 1822, leaving her alone with five children to support. With few employment options open to an educated woman, she embarked on a literary career. She published several works of poetry, including the classic nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb" known and loved by children all over the world. Hale soon became the first female editor of an early ladies' magazine. The success of this publication led to the creation of *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1837, which became the most popular periodical in the country and brought Hale fame and influence across America. She was an abolitionist and early crusader for women's rights, fighting for critical issues such as educational and economic opportunities. Today, she is known for championing the effort to make Thanksgiving a national holiday. For years, she argued that a day of gratitude for God's blessings would help bring together the divided nation. After a direct letter to President Abraham Lincoln from Hale herself, a proclamation was issued on October 3rd, 1863, asking all Americans to celebrate a day of thanks on the final Thursday of November. She continued to be a strong advocate for freedom and opportunity until her death at the age of 91.

Sarah Josepha Hale was one of the most important women in America during the era surrounding the Civil War. She was not only an important voice for the rights of others, but also an inspirational figure to women across the country. We are especially grateful for her work in establishing the Thanksgiving holiday.